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INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0039

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 004168

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [EFIN](#) [ECON](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT PREPARING TO HOST IRAQI OFFICIALS; FORMAL
DIPLOMATIC TIES STILL WEAK

REF: BAGHDAD 2314

Classified by ECPO Counselor Catherine Hill-Herndon for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) During the July 4 Embassy reception, poloff discussed Iraqi-Egyptian relations with Iraqi Embassy diplomatic attache, Amir Abbas (protect). Asked about upcoming senior visits between Cairo and Baghdad, Abbas shared that he was working with contacts at the Egyptian General Intelligence Service to coordinate a visit to Cairo by Iraqi Intelligence Chief General Mohamed Abdullah Shahwani. Abbas believed the visit would take place in the coming weeks, and believed the exchange was also being coordinated between Egypt and the Saudis. Also expected to visit Cairo soon is Deputy Prime Minister Salam al Zaibai, Abbas said. Asked about a possible visit to Egypt by SCIRI representative Abdel Aziz al Hakim, Abbas said he was unaware of any plans for Hakim to visit at this time. (Note: It is possible that such a visit by a SCIRI rep would not be coordinated with the Iraqi Embassy in Cairo. End note).

12. (C) Responding to poloff's inquiries on an Iraqi Ambassadorial nominee for Cairo, Abbas said he did not think there would be a new Ambassador sent in the short term, since it was unclear whether the current nominee (Hajj al Hammoud) could legally be posted given his age (70 years) and MFA retirement rules. Referring to an Egyptian MFA report that three Egyptian nationals had been kidnapped from a commercial reconstruction project in Basra July 3, poloff enquired if the Egyptians had contacted the Iraqi Embassy. Abbas was unaware of the news, nor of any GOE attempt to communicate to the Iraqi mission. Poloff later pressed MFA contacts to engage their Iraqi Embassy counterparts on issues such as this. In the same vein, poloff learned that the Egyptian MFA has taken no action on a formal Iraqi request to send a military attache to Cairo. The request, Abbas said, has been pending for months and months. Abbas said the Iraqis would be grateful if the Americans gave the Egyptians a "push" on this issue.
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